

FM REVIEW 2015 8 Comments

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: Although a well-written and at times amusingly self-deprecating essay, I do not think it is appropriate for Family Medicine. There is some controversy about international medical missions regarding the potential imbalance of benefits to first world learners compared to those for developing world patients. In this essay, the author, a 4th year medical student, has not (yet) started his formal scheduled medical mission, but is working on an organic farm in a remote region of Peru. For some reason, his boss (an expat American, which also raises issues about questionable judgment) suggests he make a medical visit to a worker's sick child. Fortunately, it seems the child only has a cold. But the author does not acknowledge the potential risk and ethical issues raised by a partially trained, unlicensed (in any country) student "acting out" a doctor role. I feel the essay does not do justice to the complexity of the situation, and the potential for unwitting exploitation of a vulnerable patient.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this submission. It is well-written and well-observed. The experience clearly gave you an exhilarating taste of the responsibilities and privileges that you will earn over the next years. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept the essay for publication. The situation raises some complex ethical issues that cannot adequately be addressed in a 1000 word essay but that complicate the straightforward story you are trying to tell. Thank you for the opportunity to consider your work.